



2016 Convocation

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2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation

Report of the NALS President

The North American Lutheran Seminary

...Sending Laborers into the Harvest

Mission/Vision of the NALS

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, we are forming pastors and church leaders for the North American Lutheran Church who will faithfully preach, teach, and live God's eternal truth, through word and Sacrament, proclaiming Christ's cross and resurrection, making disciples who will renew and grow the church in Christ's name.

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Greetings to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! It is with great joy that I can report to you that we've had a wonderful and fruitful year at the North American Lutheran Seminary. Our students continue to grow in wisdom, faith, and knowledge of the Lord. They are inquisitive and thoughtful in their studies, compassionate and caring in their relationships, and filled with the joy of the Lord in their preaching and teaching. Day by day they continue to put their trust in God as he is leading them into the future that he is preparing for them as servants of the Word.

We rejoice that four of our NALS students received their M.Div.'s. in May and one, who received an M.Div. from another seminary, earned a Diploma in Lutheran Studies through the NALS. Here's a sample of what they have to say about their NALS education:

"The partnership of having NALS on the campus of Trinity School for Ministry gives Lutheran students an ecumenical heart for the Gospel while at the same time distinguishing and reinforcing Lutheran Word and Sacrament ministry that will impact our congregations long into the future."

"My time at the NALS has been a gift. I have been so thankful for the chance to learn from our Lutheran faculty here. It is really something to have had the opportunity to study with teachers who represent a broad spectrum of the Lutheran tradition, and who have, as a unified whole, been consistent, faithful, and confessional witnesses to God's truth in the world."

"Not only have I learned Lutheran history, liturgy and theology, but my family and I have been and continue to be formed as Christian leaders for Word and Sacrament ministry."

"I believe that what is happening here represents a great gift. The NALC, as well as the wider church, will continue to benefit from the faithful witness being passed on through the training that all of the NALS students are receiving. I am eternally thankful that the NALC has begun taking the steps to provide a truly world class education for their future pastors and I can only pray that I will be able to share the gifts that I have received by being here as I move forward into my service in God's Church."

“The NALS has been such a positive experience for me. The guidance and leadership of the incredible staff— especially Dr. Schifrin and Dr. Yeago — has been formative both in my own faith journey and in preparing for the ministry of word and sacrament. If you are looking for a seminary that’s Christ-centered, biblically sound, confessional, and affordable, look no further than the NALS!”

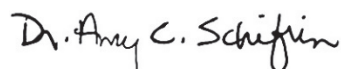
As the NALC seeks to continue her faithful witness, making disciples of all nations, these new graduates will be at the forefront of the church’s ministry.

We continue to be thankful for our partnership with Trinity School for Ministry in Ambridge, PA. Our common commitments to the centrality of Scripture and the call to mission have given our students just the right place to be formed as confessional Lutheran pastors who are strengthened through their relationships within the wider church. Our NALS students are learning to articulate the Apostolic faith with grace and beauty, and they are building friendships across denominational lines that will become a building block for their lives in their future parishes and mission outposts.

We’ve learned through the past few years that we need a strong and stable Seminary Center before can expand into the House of Studies model which we have been envisioning. Our NALS program in Charlotte, NC has come to an end. Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary will return to having its own Department of Lutheran Studies and the NALS will take some time for discernment before we begin any new expansion. We need more eager students, and larger faculty and support staff to accomplish such growth, which means we also need pastors and parishioners who will identify potential students, constant prayer, and continued financial support. We need to keep cultivating an ecclesial culture that values residential seminary education as an imperative for full pastoral formation. In an age when distance and online learning is growing exponentially, we need to remember that pastors work incarnately within their communities. They tend the flock. They feed the sheep. (John 21:17) In order to do it well, they need to learn how to listen, how to speak, how to relate to those who are suffering, how to hold those who are dying, and how to speak a word that brings the dead to life — week after week after week. The best preparation for such fruitful ministry is within a community of believers where they are both challenged and supported in their studies, where they pray and sing together, where they receive the Lord’s body and blood together, where they share everyday meals together, and where they find out from the inside what it means to be called to serve all those whom Christ loves. This is the life we share at the NALS.

It’s a privilege and a pleasure to serve as the President of the North American Lutheran Seminary, to serve and guide this next generation of pastors, to learn from steadfast colleagues, and to know with assurance that our graduates will be bearers of the Gospel into all the world.

In Christ’s name,



The Rev. Dr. Amy C. Schifrin, President

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation

Report of the Board of Regents of the North American Lutheran Seminary

The following individuals served as members of the Board of Regents of the North American Lutheran Seminary during the past year:

M. Roy Schwarz, MD, Chair
Donna Evans, Vice Chair
Rev. Donna Smith, Secretary
Rev. Wendy Berthelsen
Bishop John Bradosky
Rev. Phillip Gagnon
Rev. Jeffray Greene
Franklin Merrell
Rev. Dieter Punt
Rev. Mark Ryman
Bishop Paull Spring

The BOR has matured in understanding of its roles, responsibilities and relationships. As such it has been a year of immense growth.

Developments in 2015-2016

Gordon Conwell House of Studies (GCHS):

The BOR made the decision to close the NALS GCHS for a number of reasons. First, some requirements of the NALS and GCHS are in conflict and it is unlikely that either would be able to change. Second, there have been tension points and disagreements between NALS and the GCHS that could not be resolved. Third, no students were harmed by this decision. Fourth, the BOR felt the NALS could better use its resources in other pursuits.

This does not mean the BOR has lost confidence in the NALS model of a “hub and spokes” (home campus and Houses of Study (HOS)) enterprise, but we now understand that there are certain requirements which must be met before a HOS is opened. We believe avoiding ownership of buildings and ground gives us maximum flexibility for program development in the future.

Seminary:

The BOR has been working to define the type of seminary graduate that the NALC needs now and in the future. The corollary of this principle is the necessity of clarifying the kind of seminary and types of seminary experiences needed to produce pastors who will be able to meet the challenges of pastoring in tomorrow’s world.

BOR Members:

Four members of the BOR have fulfilled their terms of office including Paull Spring, Donna Evans, Frank Merrell. Mark Ryman resigned from the Board when he joined the staff of the NALC. We thank these

people for their faithful service and look forward to welcoming the newly elected Regents that emerge from this Convocation.

Students:

It is inspiring to the BOR to read the student comments about their NALS experiences as recorded in President Amy Schifrin's report. These sentiments make the efforts by all of us in the NALC worthwhile. Based on personal discussions with Trinity students, it is clear that the NALS is also having a very positive effect on Trinity Seminary and its student body.

Personal:

I am completing two years as Chair of the NALS BOR. It has been gratifying, educational, inspiring, and, at times, frustrating. NALS and its BOR have matured and developed in the two years, and I have been honored and privileged to serve as chair.

Respectfully submitted,

M. Roy Schwarz, MD, Chair

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation

Report of the Candidacy Committee

The facts:

The Candidacy Committee is a 12-member panel representing the NALC from coast to coast. Together we work to support future leaders of the church. In partnership with the Bishop, his staff, Mission District deans, seminary representatives, and internship supervisors, we seek to prayerfully guide qualified candidates as they move through the educational process and discern God's call to ministry. The committee oversees internship site development and placement. We also review applications to the NALC theological education scholarship fund, giving our recommendations to the NALC Executive Staff. In addition to our work with seminarians, the committee also works in the colloquy process for ordained pastors seeking to come into the NALC from non-Lutheran traditions.

The committee meets each year in March, June, and October to conduct interview panels for individuals at various stages in the candidacy process. Whether coming to us for an entrance, endorsement, or approval decision, (or perhaps a developmental interview for additional guidance), the committee seeks to aid the candidate's discernment process and theological development while at the same time bearing in mind the requirements and expectations of the wider church. Through the three milestones of the candidacy process, candidates are reviewed to determine their progress using seminary transcripts, candidacy essays, CPE and/or internship evaluations, and individual conversations with members of the committee that are focused on biblical, theological, and confessional matters. Personal and pastoral references as well as full criminal background checks and a psychological evaluation are required of all NALC ministry candidates.

The need:

The work of candidacy is important, but it all starts with you. Candidates for ministry in the NALC come from our congregations. We continue to need pastors to serve Christ's church. Your nurture, care, support, and lifting up of leaders is the first and all-important step of the candidacy process. Look at members of your congregation and ask yourself, "Who has God gifted for ordained ministry? Who might God be calling to serve in the Office of Holy Ministry?" And then, having identified that person (those people!), work with them and help them in their discernment process. One of our core values is that we are Congregationally Focused; future pastors come from you!

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the committee,

The Rev. Keith Falk, Interim Chair

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation Report of the Commission on Theology and Doctrine

The Commission on Theology and Doctrine is charged by the NALC Constitution to give attention to theological and doctrinal concerns and to serve as the committee on ecumenical relationships for the North American Lutheran Church.

The 2015 Convocation voted to alter the composition of the Commission's membership, and that action was subsequently ratified by the required number of congregations. The Commission now includes the following persons: Dr. Robert Benne, Bishop John Bradosky, Dr. David Hahm, the Rev. Dr. Benjamin Johnson, the Rev. Dr. Maurice Lee, the Rev. Dr. James Nestingen, the Rev. Eric Riesen, the Rev. Dr. Amy Schiffrin, Bishop emeritus Paull Spring, Dr. David Yeago, the Rev. Dr. Larry Yoder, and the Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder. During the past year Bishop Kenneth Sauer resigned from the Commission. It is anticipated that during the coming year there will likely be some changes in the membership of the Commission.

Over the past year the Commission met twice. As part of its work, the Commission received reports on the progress of the Task Force on Church and Ministry. The Commission adopted statements — words of counsel and advice — on religious freedom, physician-assisted suicide, and same sex unions. With the approval of the NALC Executive Council, these statements were commended to the church for study and reflection. The Commission also approved an updated and slightly modified Statement on Ecumenical Relationships.

The Commission sees as its major priorities for the coming year a statement on the Bible as the Word of God and a statement on marriage and sexuality.

Plans for this year's Colloquy for Younger Theologians and the Benne–Braaten Lecture Series were received and approved.

The Commission's other responsibility is to coordinate ecumenical relationships. The report by Pastor David Wendel for this Convocation provides a description of the ecumenical endeavors of the North American Lutheran Church.

Last August the North American Lutheran Church hosted a gathering of orthodox and confessional Lutheran reform movements and churches. Attending were NALC and Lutheran CORE representatives, as well as delegates from Scandinavia, Germany, and Africa. The 2015 gathering approved the formation of a coalition. It also recognized three priorities: mutual support and encouragement, theological reflection on themes related to the Lutheran Confessions, and strategies for renewal, mission, and discipleship.

The 2016 gathering, which will meet at the conclusion of Lutheran Week, will consider ways to implement the priorities, as well as take action on a proposed doctrinal statement.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Paull E. Spring, Convener

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation Report of the Court of Adjudication

The Court of Adjudication respectfully presents this report.

I. Cases Handled

No cases within the Court's jurisdiction were filed, considered, or decided in the last year.

We all are privileged to serve and we stand ready to fulfill the responsibilities assigned by the Constitution to the Court of Adjudication. We are, however, gratified that no conflicts have yet required our attention.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard F. Currey, Esq.
Jon Evans, Esq.
James H. Gale, Esq.
The Rev. Jeffray Greene
The Rev. Glen Johnson
Carolyn Nestingen, Esq.
The Rev. Marty Ramey

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation

Report of the NALC Canada Section

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As of this writing I am preparing to set out for a mission trip to Mexico involving two of our congregations, St. Albert Evangelical Lutheran and Calvary Lutheran in Edmonton. And so I end my time as chair as I began, with the goal of our life together to be that of reaching out to the world in missions to proclaim the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

To the point, the Canada Section finally received its charitable status as of June 2015 and we are now better prepared to venture into the future God has in store for us than before. We have not had (because of this waiting for the charitable status) much occasion to deliberate on many issues, but we have done some work. The Canada Section operates, if you will, much like the church council, with mission districts being akin to various committees (such as youth and education, trustees, etc.) presenting their goals and activities to the Canada Section for approval. Accordingly, much of the activities we are to be about have been pursued by the mission district, since we have one mission district overlapping with the Canada Section.

The Canada Section has responsibility to make sure that pastoral salary guidelines are prepared in conjunction with approval by the General Secretary according to Canadian context, that health/dental and pensions are available for those pastors who wish to participate in the Lutheran Church of Canada plans. Additionally, it exists to make sure that our stated charitable activities are followed within the mission district.

Also, as we mature as a church in Canada (five years after being founded) we will hopefully have enough pastors/congregations to join the Lutheran Council of Churches which oversees chaplaincy in the military and correctional institutions across Canada. As the Canada Section (with 22 congregations), we are spread out across four provinces and for us to have our own marriage license status as a church we need to have congregations in five provinces. To date, the Lutheran Church Canada has been gracious enough to allow us to not only participate in their health/dental and pension plans, but also temporarily issue marriage licenses.

We have also been able to send \$10,000.00 CAD to the NALC main office and \$10,000.00 CAD to the NALS. Rev. Bjoern Meinhardt will be our representative on the board for Canadian Lutheran World Relief, and we have sponsored our Canadian students for various amounts for seminary instruction. Further, I was able to secure a \$40,000.00 CAD bequest from one donor and another \$10,000.00 CAD donation was added to this seed money for a \$50,000.00 total to create the Canada Section Seminarian Fund. This fund shall be used for Canadian seminarian support and to help rural congregations who would like to receive an intern but cannot afford it.

We have had two youth conferences in May of 2014 and 2015, which were well attended considering the size of our mission district and the geographical challenges we face in Canada. This last April we had our fifth Canadian Rockies Theological Conference in Canmore, Alberta with Mr. Rod Dreher and Dr. Peter Leithart as our speakers. The discussion surrounding the theme of “Relevant or Remnant?” was illuminating and, shall I say, relevant? We look forward to our sixth conference May 9-12th, 2017, with speakers and theme to be announced.

As my term as chair has ended, I respectfully submit this brief report and express my gratitude at having been able to serve the NALC in this capacity in the beginning of the NALC's formation in Canada. Thank you!

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Phillip Gagnon, STS

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation

Report of the NALC Disaster Response Task Force

2015-2016 Task Force Members: Mary Bates (Caldwell, OH), Deacon Robert DePugh (St. Petersburg, FL), Pr. Michael Giese (Rosenberg, TX), Cheryl Inghram, (Charleston, W VA), Pr. Amy Little, (Norwalk, OH), Pr. David McGettigan (Ocean City, NJ), Jessie Phillips, (Watertown, WI), Pr. Bert Schultz, (WI)

2015-2016 Task Force Members: Mary Bates (Caldwell, OH), Deacon Robert DePugh (St. Petersburg, FL), Pr. Michael Giese (Rosenberg, TX), Cheryl Ingraham, (Charleston, W VA), Pr. Amy Little, (Norwalk, OH), Pr. David McGettigan (Ocean City, NJ), Jessie Phillips, (Watertown, WI), Pr. Bert Schultz, (WI)

Task Force

The Disaster Response Task Force (DRTF) continued to refine its long range disaster response protocol with the ultimate goal of a disaster response team trained and active in at least each NALC Mission District and in as many congregations within the Mission District as possible. In the meantime, at the recommendation of the Disaster Response Coordinator, development of an interim protocol began to guide the NALC in response to disasters as we work toward our ultimate goal which will take years to accomplish.

Additions to the DRTF are planned particularly in the areas of communications, media and electronics to assist in strengthening these weak areas in our outreach.

Training

As mentioned, our long range goal is to train as many congregations as possible in every Mission District for disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Due to a sabbatical on the part of our principal trainer, fewer training sessions than planned occurred in 2015-2016. There are plans to make up that deficit in the coming year. Trainings accomplished to date:

- Carolinas MD
- Mid-Northeast MD
- South Carolina (additional training for long term rebuilding)

An additional training for the Fall 2016 is scheduled for:

- Wisconsin-Upper Michigan MD

Negotiations are active for trainings in the early part of 2017 in the Northwest, Sonshine, and possibly Atlantic Mission Districts (two trainings). The DRTF is always looking for host congregations for trainings.

In addition, a successful Servant Youth Event was held July 12-17, 2015 at the NALC Disaster Warehouse in Caldwell, OH. The event, where youth learned how to volunteer in times of disaster, including both early response and long term recovery, was co-hosted by HARP Mission. Our 2016 Servant Youth Event is planned for July 25-29.

Disaster Coordinator and Disaster Response

The DRTF, NALC national office, and NALC congregations were active in response to several new and ongoing disasters. The nature of the response varied from direct service, to materials, to funding, to sometimes simple assessment, consultation, or counsel.

- Hurricane Sandy – ended in 2016
- South Carolina – early response with clean-up and flood buckets, quilts and Bibles. Now in long term recovery, with St. Peter ELC, Lexington, SC, serving as a volunteer housing site with the NALC shower trailer on site.
- Ongoing flooding in Texas (Houston, TX area) – South Texas Mission District, especially Rosenberg area, assessing and responding with leadership from both Peace ELC and St. Paul ELC
- Alberta, Canada, wildfire – response and grant to and with our Canadian Mission District partners to Ft. McMurray losses and rebuilding. Plans to meet with Canada MD Dean at Convocation in Anaheim for further planning.
- West Virginia floods – Mary Bates dispatched week of June 30 week for assessment and communication with St. Timothy ELC, Charleston, WV, regarding needs and NALC response.
- Various smaller disasters where there may not have been NALC congregations nearby or able to respond directly for which the DRTF is developing the interim disaster response protocol, allowing the NALC still to assist.

In addition, the Disaster Response Coordinator began the process of database development for regular communication to both volunteers who have received training as well as those whom we have contacted through the congregational skills inventory.

In this first year of the position of Disaster Response Coordinator, assessing the unique circumstances of the NALC congregations and the quite unpredictable pattern and unfolding of disasters, the DRC began development of and recommended to the Task Force the interim disaster response protocol mentioned above. This is an attempt to provide an organized means for the NALC to respond to as many disasters as possible, whether there are NALC congregations near or even able to respond, as we also satisfy the larger call of NALC congregations across the country asking “what are WE doing?”.

Also, travelled for presentations re: NALC Disaster Response:

- Carolina Mission District Convocation
- Wisconsin-Upper Michigan Mission District Convocation
- WNALC meeting, Bethany ELC, Montoursville, PA
- Training, Mid-Northeast Mission District
- 2015 NALC Convocation, Dallas, TX
- Disaster Response Task Force annual meeting and Houston flood assessment, Rosenberg, TX

Respectfully Submitted,

The Rev. Bert Schultz
NALC Disaster Response Task Force Chair

The Rev. David M. McGettigan
NALC Disaster Response Coordinator

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation

Report of the Nominating Committee

The 2016 Nominating Committee presents the candidates named below for positions to be elected at the August Convocation. We believe that all the individuals named are qualified and would do well in their service if elected.

Each year the Convocation elects one pastor and one layperson to the Executive Council for four-year terms.

One individual will be elected to a four-year term on the Court of Adjudication.

Every other year, the Convocation elects three persons to six-year terms on the NALS Board of Regents. This year, because of a resignation *ad interim*, the Convocation will also elect one person to fill the remaining four years of a six-year term.

In addition, the NALC Canada Section has asked the Convocation to elect four persons (one pastor and one layperson each for two- and four-year terms) to the Section Board. The candidates were nominated at the Canada Mission District Convocation in April, 2016.

This year's candidates are as follows:

Executive Council, clergy, four-year term (elect one): Pr. Carl Haynes, Pr. Kenneth Kimball, Pr. William Maki

Executive Council, lay, four-year term (elect one): Ms. Rebecka Andrae, Ms. Pamela Charas, Ms. Kathryn Hudnall, Ms. Lynn Kickingbird, Ms. Janet Rash

Court of Adjudication, four-year term (elect one): Pr. David Schafer

NALS Board of Regents, six-year term (elect three): Pr. Cathi Braasch, Pr. Jeffray Green, Pr. Kristopher Madsen, Pr. Dennis Meyer, Pr. Allen Schoonover, Pr. Kris Snyder, Ms. Donna Evans

NALS Board of Regents, four-year term (elect one): Bp. Ralph Kempinski, Pr. Thurmond Plexico, Bp. Paull Spring

The Nominating Committee requested nominations from NALC congregations and NALC members by sending an email request to congregations and by including requests for nominations in the *NALC News*. Those nominated were asked to provide biographical information using a form developed by the committee.

Biographical information on the candidates was provided in accordance with the NALC Constitution, which requires the Nominating Committee to provide information on the candidates 90 days prior to the Convocation. In accordance with NALC Constitutional requirements, the list of candidates and their qualifications was posted on the NALC website on May 13, 2016, published in the *NALC News* for May, June and July, and sent by e-mail to NALC congregations. Because no individuals had been nominated for the lay position on the Executive Council during the initial nominating period, a request for additional

nominations was issued. Biographical information on the additional candidates was published 45 days prior to the Convocation, on June 27, 2016.

The Nominating Committee also received nominations for the 2017 Nominating Committee and forwarded those names to the Executive Council for consideration. The Executive Council submits proposed members of the Nominating Committee for confirmation by the Convocation.

In addition, the NALC Canada Section has asked the Convocation to elect four persons (one pastor and one layperson each for two- and four-year terms) to the Section Board. The candidates were nominated at the Canada Mission District Convocation in April, 2016.

NALC Canada Section Board, four-year term (elect two): Ms. Teresa Peters, Pr. Kevin Ree

NALC Canada Section Board, two-year term (elect two): Mr. Ralph Wold, Pr. Rolf Bjornstad

We were grateful to receive the names of so many well-qualified individuals for service to our church. God has blessed the NALC with many dedicated servants. Please pray that God will raise up the leaders who will best serve us at this time in the life of our church.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Don Brandt, Chair
The Rev. Cathi Braasch
Mr. Harvey Hengst
Ms. Shelly Ree
The Rev. Bert Schultz

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation

Report of the Stewardship Task Force

The Stewardship Task Force was formed in 2015 and consists of Pastors Gerry Miller, Wally Seibel, Mark Graham, Dona Johnson and Eugene Grimm. Dr. David Wendel, Assistant to the Bishop, and Ryan Schwarz, NALC treasurer, also work with the task force.

The goals of the Stewardship Task Force are, among other things, to:

- Inform congregations regarding the mission and ministry of the NALC as a whole, including the Great Commission Society and the North American Lutheran Seminary, with the intention of strengthening those ministries and their financial support.
- Encourage and assist congregations to grow in their total mission support (to all mission/ministries) to 12-15% of congregational income, with equal support to local, continental, global and larger church.
- Help congregations celebrate the work we do together.
- Evaluate and assess how development will “work” in the NALC, including the relationship to the North American Lutheran Seminary.
- Target pastors, councils and leaders with a devotional DVD to educate and inspire regarding mission support and giving to NALC ministries as a whole, to be shown and distributed to congregations at our Convocation.
 - Emphasize that our ministries are congregationally focused, with stories/“pictures.”
 - Inspire joy and eagerness to give, for ministry.
- Develop stewardship-oriented council devotions.
- Communicate announced goals for annual giving in the NALC to meet the budget.
- Evaluate and assess endowments (congregational, NALC, NALS).

Last fall, the task force provided to congregations a series of bulletin inserts to help members grow in their understanding of the mission and ministry we do together.

Pr. Dona Johnson has completed a four-part stewardship Bible study series entitled “Overflowing Generosity” that will be available on our website in the near future. We encourage congregations to use this study in:

- Church council meetings,
- Sunday school classes,
- Small group gatherings,
- And in conjunction with our *Overflowing Generosity Stewardship Program*.

We will also be publishing the *Overflowing Generosity Stewardship Program* on our website. The primary purpose of a stewardship program is to assist and enable our members to grow in spiritual discipline, especially as it relates to giving. Whether conducted in the fall or in the spring, we encourage congregations to use this program.

Finally, one important aspect of our work together is to lift up the mission and ministry of our NALC. The NALC is not a hierarchical Church, but there are some things that we as a denomination can do better together. We want to encourage our congregations, when preparing budgets for the coming year, to

prayerfully consider growing in mission support to the NALC by one percent of current congregational giving. In addition to this, we encourage our member congregations to at least tithe to their benevolences beyond the congregation.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev. Eugene Grimm

2016 North American Lutheran Church Convocation

Report of the Women of the NALC

Connecting with our Sisters in Christ to Share God's Love

This past year has been one of growth and change for the Women of the North American Lutheran Church (WNALC). We are connecting with more and more women in NALC congregations, and that is exciting. As our Purpose Statement says, “We dedicate ourselves to guide and direct the Women of the NALC in their efforts to move forward in faith and mission, through prayer and evangelism, with the Holy Scriptures as the final authority in all matters.”

The Women’s Council (our executive board) met last October at Immanuel Lutheran Church, Lebanon, WI, for our Fall Planning Meeting. All seven members of the Council (Linda Brower, TX; Pam Charas, OH; Robbie Conley, MI; Pat Dittrich, TX; Sherrie Palan, TX; Jessie Phillips, WI; Amy Werner, PA) were able to attend. Lodging and food were supplied by the gracious members of Immanuel. Over three days, we met to set goals for our year and for the WNALC.

At our Annual Gathering in Dallas 2015, we introduced our “Mission Bank” ministry. Women were encouraged to take a “My Mission Bank” label, attach it to a container and to daily “Pray for Missions, Praise God for the work He is accomplishing, and Give Thanks with a coin offering to help further God’s Kingdom on earth.” Each year, the coin offerings will be collected by June 30th and at that year’s Annual Gathering, the women will vote on a mission recipient for 100% of the offerings collected. At the meeting in Dallas, we asked the women to make an initial “step in faith” offering of \$5,000, split between India Transformed and China Service Ventures. We are excited to see how our offerings will bless another mission this year.

We began distributing our newsletter through the NALC database, which has helped this publication reach more women. We were fortunate to have Lane Magera step up and volunteer to be our newsletter editor – she has done an excellent job in putting our news together! We also created a new Facebook page. Look for it under WNALC-Women of the NALC.

Speaking of volunteers, we took the names of volunteers offered at the Annual Gathering and began meeting as committees. This is a step the Council has been working towards for several years. We hope to have more women step up and volunteer to help steer the direction of the WNALC in the future.

One big “change” that the Council worked on this past year has been our Operational Guidelines. Following the need to have a couple of sections interpreted by the NALC parliamentarian at our 2015 Annual Gathering, the Council felt we should take a good look at this document to determine if there were other areas that needed some fine tuning. The Rev. Dr. Jeffray Greene, appointed parliamentarian for last year’s (2015) NALC Convocation, agreed to look over our document and make recommendations for changes to clarify a number of areas, making it more understandable and user-friendly. This revised document will be voted on at the 2016 WNALC Annual Gathering.

With each Council member being assigned as representatives to the various Mission Districts within the NALC, we continue to work on connecting with our sisters in Christ, and we are always excited to hear about what each women's ministry is doing. Continue to share those activities with your representative and the Council. Let us know how we can help you in mission and ministry.

With God's continued guidance and your prayers, the Women of the NALC will continue to grow and be a vital ministry that shares the Good News of Jesus Christ in the world.

Respectfully submitted,

Sherrie Palan, Chair

Linda Brower, Vice Chair

The Women's Council for the Women of the NALC

